

What is Cholangiocarcinoma?

Cholangiocarcinoma, or bile duct cancer, is a cancerous (malignant) tumor that arises from the tissues in the bile duct and its branches. The tumors may arise at any location along the bile duct. The term, cholangiocarcinoma, is frequently used to refer to any primary cancer of the biliary system. However, historically, cholangiocarcinoma was restricted to malignant tumors arising in the intrahepatic bile duct, that being the portion of the bile duct within the liver.

What is the biliary system?

The biliary system is comprised of a network or tree-like structure of ducts for carrying bile between the liver, gall bladder, and small intestine. Bile is made in the liver and stored in the gallbladder, and helps to both break down fats found in foods and rid the body of waste material filtered out of the bloodstream by the liver. Right and left hepatic bile ducts inside the liver collect the bile, and join outside the liver to form the common bile duct (extrahepatic bile duct), which carries the bile to the small intestine.

What are the symptoms of Cholangiocarcinoma?

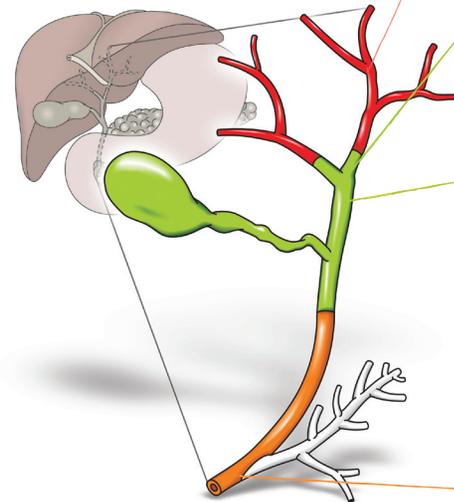
Symptoms indicating cholangiocarcinoma may vary depending on the patient, the extent of the tumor, and the position of the tumor. Further, symptoms indicating cholangiocarcinoma may also be symptomatic of other conditions. Therefore, please consult a physician should any of the following occur:

- Jaundice –yellowing of the skin or eyes
- Abdominal pain
- Itchy skin
- Weight loss
- Poor appetite
- Abnormal liver function
- Changes in stool or urine color
- Fever

What are the risk factors for developing cholangiocarcinoma?

Research has shown that some disorders may increase the chances of developing cholangiocarcinoma. Disorders leading to increased risk include the following:

- Primary sclerosing cholangitis: chronic inflammation of the bile ducts
- Chronic ulcerative colitis: chronic inflammation of the bowel
- Choledochal cysts: sac-like structures forming off the bile ducts



What treatments are available for Cholangiocarcinoma?

The course of treatment for cholangiocarcinoma will depend on the location of the tumor(s), the size of the tumor(s), and the stage of the cancer, as well as the patient's general health, age, and treatment preferences. Treatments available are evolving, and may include surgery, liver transplant, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, photodynamic therapy, and biliary drainage.

What is Intrahepatic Cholangiocarcinoma?

When the malignant tumor forms in the portion of the bile duct inside the liver, this is known as intrahepatic cholangiocarcinoma. Intrahepatic cholangiocarcinoma is currently classified as primary liver cancer, and is believed to represent approximately 10% of new liver cancer diagnoses in the United States.

What is a Klatskin Tumor?

A Klatskin tumor, also known as perihilar bile duct cancer, is an extrahepatic malignant tumor that arises at the junction point after the left and right hepatic bile ducts exit the liver. Klatskin tumors are believed to represent approximately two-thirds of all new cholangiocarcinoma cases in the United States.

What is Extrahepatic Cholangiocarcinoma?

When the malignant tumor forms in the portion of the bile duct outside the liver, this is known as extrahepatic cholangiocarcinoma. The extrahepatic bile duct is joined by a duct from the gallbladder to form the common bile duct. Adenocarcinomas are the most common type of extrahepatic cholangiocarcinomas.

What is Distal Bile Duct Cancer?

Distal bile duct cancer is an extrahepatic malignant tumor that arises on the bottom portion of the bile duct, near where the common bile duct meets the small intestine and pancreas. Due to the location, distal bile duct cancer is often treated similarly to pancreatic cancer.





Join us!

The Cholangiocarcinoma Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Its vision is to bring about a *CURE* for cholangiocarcinoma through:

Collaboration. The Cholangiocarcinoma Foundation strives to improve collaboration among researchers, clinicians, public and private institutions, and non-profit organizations.

Understanding. The Cholangiocarcinoma Foundation provides resources to assist in the challenges the cholangiocarcinoma patient, caregiver, and extended community experience.

Research. The Cholangiocarcinoma Foundation supports furthering cholangiocarcinoma research through providing investigative grants to researchers engaged in cholangiocarcinoma studies.

Education. The Cholangiocarcinoma Foundation provides the most current information on cholangiocarcinoma through the website, bi-annual newsletter, support of medical conferences, and community outreach.

www.cholangiocarcinoma.org



For more information, or to help fund the *CURE*

Visit our website:

www.cholangiocarcinoma.org

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Patients, caregivers, researchers,
clinicians, private and public
institutions working together to find a
cure for cholangiocarcinoma.

